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ABSTRACT

In the spring of 1985, 58 undergraduate students at a large university in the Southwest in a beginning course in diagnosis and instruction in reading were shown a videotape of a librarian who was demonstrating the art of telling stories to elementary school students. Following the viewing of the videotape instructional module, the subjects completed a questionnaire on their opinions about the value of this type of module. Aside from being impressed with the production and content of the videotape presentation, the students strongly felt that viewing it had a great deal of value for them as students and future teachers. They endorsed having the videotape as a permanent part of the course, and unanimously wished to see additional tapes. They showed that they were capable of identifying the major points presented in the tape and indicated strongly that videotapes help them to learn effectively. In the summer of 1985, a followup study was conducted with 18 students taking the same undergraduate reading course. These students were shown four videotapes as part of instruction. These students responded positively with their overall impressions of the four videos, but were not as enthusiastic as the students in the previous sstudy who had seen only one. The students also expressed a strong desire to have more instruction in this manner. Findings indicated that 30-minute presentations are optimum for holding students' interest and attention. (JD)

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Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Videotaped Instructional Modules in Undergraduate Reading Courses

William J. Valmont

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Pre-service Teachers' Attitudes
Toward Videotaped Instructional Modules
in Undergraduate Reading Courses

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INTRODUCTION

Two of many unresolved issues in teacher training are: (1) how to provide pre-service teachers with realistic, firsthand views of teaching, and (2) when to provide new teachers with direct, hands on experiences in classroom settings. One problem lies in the constricted ability of most pre-service teachers to understand how the "real world" of teaching works. This makes it difficult for undergraduates to relate to teacher preparation instruction in college or university courses during their pre-service training. When professors discuss classroom techniques and procedures, students generally lack appropriate referents in terms of classroom experiences to obtain maximum value from the professor's lecture. On the one hand, many college students are not ready to profit from direct experiences with students in a school setting. On the other hand, it is clear that students must view the world of the classroom in order to profit from teacher preparation programs.

Instruction utilizing videotaped presentations may be extremely useful in helping students gain "real" observational experiences without being overwhelmed. Pre-service teachers, through viewing videotapes, can see how experienced teachers handle tasks and situations which they, themselves, will need to deal with eventually in teaching. Through videotape

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observations and course discussions in controlled settings, pre-service teachers may be better prepared to commence teaching, because they will have "seen the real world" without being in the middle of it.

Although television has been a mainstay in the American culture since the 1950s, and although some uses of instructional television have been made in institutions of higher learning, it is apparent from even a cursory observation that video technology has not been fully utilized in teacher training. A review of research literature indicates that a scant amount of investigations have been completed. In recent years, computers have dominated the attention of educators, and the compelling need to be help children become "computer literate" has forced educators to deal with some of the modern technology. Regardless of their effectiveness, however, computers are not the only instructional tools which educators can use to train today's pre-service teachers. Video instruction must be considered as well, because this is a medium of motion and action which lends itself well to revealing life in classroom settings.

The purpose of this investigation was to discern the attitudes of undergraduate students toward being instructed through the use of videotaped instructional modules. Fifty-eight undergraduate students taking a beginning course in diagnosis and instruction in reading at a major University in the Southwest participated in this study in the spring of 1985. Only a few students had actual teaching experiences: most had not yet participated in student teaching. Students were shown an instructional videotape of a librarian who was demonstrating the art of telling stories to elementary school students. Following the viewing of the videotaped instructional module, the subjects in this study completed a questionnaire (See appendix A).

FINDINGS

The fifty-eight students who participated in the study were asked to rate their "overall impression" of a one-hour videotaped presentation. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the students rated the presentation "excellent," and 45% rated it as "very good." Another 2% rated the tape "all right," but none of the students rated the tape as "poor" or "very poor."

In addition, students were asked to rate the "content" of the videotape presentation. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the students rated the content "excellent." Another 26% rated the content "very good." Two percent (2%) gave the tape an "all right" rating, but none of the students rated the tape "poor" or "very poor."

Students were asked to rate the value of the presentation as it pertained to them. Forty-one percent (41%) of the students found the videotape "very valuable" personally. Another 43% found the tape to be "valuable," and 14% found the tape to be "somewhat valuable." None of the students rated the tape "not too valuable" or "not valuable at all." Two percent (2%) of the students failed to respond to this item.

Another way to assess the students' judgment concerning the value of the videotape was to ask, "Should this video be made a permanent part of this course?" Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the students responded "yes," and only 12% responded, "no." Those responding negatively indicated that they thought the particular tape they viewed belonged in a library science course instead of a reading course. They did not object to the content of the presentation per se.

A unanimous vote of all fifth-eight students (100%) to the question, "Would you like to see other videotaped presentations in this course,"

indicates the overwhelming acceptance of videotaped presentations by pre-service teachers in an introductory course in reading.

Students reported their attitudes toward learning through a visual medium when responding to the following question: "How much do videotapes help you learn?" Seventy-four percent (74%) of the students answered, "a lot." Only 22% of the students responded, "a little," and no students responded, "not at all." Four percent (4%) of the students failed to respond to this item.

An attempt was made to ascertain, without formal testing, the educational impact of the videotape that was viewed. Students were asked, "What was the major thing you learned as a result of viewing this video presentation?" The variety of responses given reflected a high level of ability on the part of the students to show knowledge of the major points made by the librarian in the presentation.

A few representative comments illustrate what was deemed to be of major importance:

> I learned that "...storytelling for fun can be very educational and can incorporate many important skill-building techniques."
>
> I learned "...the importance of expression and enthusiasm on the part of the storyteller and the importance of participation and discussion on the part of the listeners."
>
> "The major thing I learned was that in telling a story, relating it from memory is preferable to reading it from a book."
>
> I learned "how important voice is when telling a story--or even just speaking. For example, acting out the different characters adds to the quality of the story."
>
> "I got a good example of a storyteller, her facial expression, body language, voice, etc."
>
> "I learned about different sources for literature, as

> well as how to integrate other cultures into children's experiences. Also, I learned how to build anticipation and encourage participation among the kids."

An attempt was made to discover the extent professors make use of videotape presentations in their teacher training classes. Only 22% of the students reported that they had seen instructional videotapes in their other classes during the 1984-1985 academic year. The other 78% indicated that they had not seen any other videotapes. Of those students responding positively, the usual number of tapes they had viewed was from two to four per class. The range was from one to eight tapes viewed.

Students' attitudes toward viewing more videotapes in all of their courses was examined. Ninety-one percent of the students responded that they would like to see more videotapes in their other classes. Only 3% responded negatively. Another 6% of the students expressed some concern over the circumstances of being shown videotapes. They were willing to see more videotapes only if they were interesting, had a great deal of quality and appropriateness to the course content, and were not overly long. Students were particularly hopeful that the tapes would not be outdated. The following comments are representative of the ideas expressed.

STUDENT COMMENTS

> Videotapes are "...helpful when used to illustrate and clarify things which are taught by an instructor."
>
> Instructional tapes "...might have some value because they give you an idea of what it will be like when you are out there teaching. It won't be a big shock."
>
> Instructional tapes provide "...a wider base, or allow a greated number of views or methods to be viewed other than those implied or demonstrated by a single instructor."
>
> "Tapes and films help to reinforce the material being

learned. And they are a nice change of pace."

"The tape is a change of pace and motivates the listener to pay attention and learn."

"I think you learn more from what you see than what you hear, and I think videotapes are great demonstrators. They help me...because they actually show me how something is done."

"The value of videotape is that it allows the presentation of a situation not otherwise available to the class in the [University] classroom situation."

"I learn from watching other people--I feel tapes would, therefore, be beneficial."

"Videotapes can be very informative and helpful.... They provide a good picture of what is being discussed in class, giving life to lectures and text reading."

I approve of tapes "...if they're interesting and pertain to the class."

I suggest showing "...not too many, because I enjoy interacting with the instructor and other students: they can be helpful."

"I feel they are very effective, providing they are relevant to what we are learning."

"I thought the video was very helpful in that it served as a model for me...."

SUMMARY

Aside from being impressed with the production and content of the videotape presentation, university students in this study strongly thought that viewing a videotaped presentation had a great deal of value for them as students and future teachers. They endorsed having the videotape as a permanent part of the course, and they unanimously wished to see additional tapes. They showed that they were capable of identifying the major points presented in the tape, and they indicated strongly that videotapes help them learn effectively. From the responses, it is clear that not a great deal of use is being made of video technology in their total preparation as

teachers. These pre-service teachers, at least, were strongly in favor of having more experiences through video instructional modules--if they are of good quality and are carefully selected and integrated into the course content. A variety of responses indicated the personal value of the experience to the subjects in the study.

APPENDIX A

Attitudes toward Videotaped

1. Rate your overall impression of the video presentation you saw
   _____5 excellent
   _____4 very good
   _____3 all right
   _____2 poor
   _____1 very poor
2. Rate the content of the video presentation
   _____5 excellent
   _____4 very good
   _____3 all right
   _____2 poor
   _____1 very poor
3. Rate the value of the presentation to me
   _____5 very valuable
   _____4 valuable
   _____3 somewhat valuable
   _____2 not too valuable
   _____1 not valuable at all
4. Should this videotape be made a permanent part of this course
   _____ yes
   _____ no
5. Would you like to see other videotaped presentations in this course?
   _____ yes
   _____ no
6. How much do videotapes help you learn?
   _____3 a lot
   _____2 a little
   _____1 not at all
7. What was the major thing you learned as a result of viewing this video presentation?

_____

_____

_____

8. Have you seen instructional videotapes in your other classes this year?
   _____ yes
   _____ no
   How many? _____
9. Would you like to see more videotapes in other courses?
   _____ yes
   _____ no
++10. What is the ideal length of a videotaped presentation?
   _____one hour
   _____thirty minutes
   _____fifteen minutes
   _____other (specify length _____)

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

++(This item was used on in a follow-up study only)

University Students' Attitudes Toward Videotaped Instruction: A Follow-up Study

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1985, 58 undergraduate students in an introductory reading course at a major university in the Southwest were administered a survey to determine their attitudes about receiving instruction through a videotape medium. All were pre-service teachers. Before completing the survey, students in the study viewed one videotape, a program in which a librarian demonstrated the art of storytelling. Findings indicate that while pre-service teachers liked the videotaped production and its content, found it to be valuable, and learned a great deal, they do not frequently receive instruction using video as a medium of presentation. Findings also indicate that pre-service teachers would welcome additional videotaped instruction if the materials were well constructed, well integrated, and were being used to supplement the instructor's presentation of information.

In the follow-up study reported here, eighteen students taking the same undergraduate reading course during the summer of 1985 were shown four videotapes as part of instruction. The presentations included: (1) a professor presenting information about coding an informal reading inventory, (2) a professor administering a test of phonic skills, (3) a librarian demonstrating the art of storytelling, and (4) a professor demonstrating how to conduct a directed reading-thinking activity. It was expected that with four videos there would be less of a novelty effect, but students would still respond positively toward video instruction. It was

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expected that students might be somewhat less positive than those students had been in the previous study in which only a single videotape was presented. In addition, it was deemed desirable to ascertain how long students believe a given video presentation should last. This information was not investigated in the previous study.

FINDINGS

Eighteen subjects in this study were asked to rate their "overall impression" of the four videotaped presentations which were shown in class. Six percent (6%) rated them as "excellent," and 77% of the students rated their overall impressions of the four presentations in the "very good" category. Another 11% rated the the tapes "all right." One student (6%) rated the program "poor."

Most of the students rated the content of the four programs "excellent" (28%) to "very good" (55%). Another 11% rated the content "all right," and 6% failed to respond to this item.

Most students found the video presentations either "very valuable" (17%) or "valuable" (72%). An additional 11% found the presentations "somewhat valuable."

The popularltiy of the presentations was noted when 94% of the students indicated they wished to have the video presentations retained as a permanent part of the course. A large number of students (83%) also wished to see additional videotaped presentations in the course they were then taking.

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of the students indicated that videos helped them learn "a lot," while 22% stated that videos helped them just "a little." No one indicated that videos did not help them at all.

Students were asked to report the major ideas they gained from viewing

the videotaped presentations. A variety of responses indicated that students had, indeed, grasped the major points presented in each of the programs.

Eighty-three percent (83%) of the students reported having seen no videotapes in other courses during the preceding year. The 17% who had seen videotapes reported seeing an average of three.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the students voted in favor of seeing more videotapes in other courses, and 61% indicated that the optimal length of viewing was thirty minutes. Twenty-two percent (22%) of the students liked 15 minute videos, and the other 17% did not specify any preferred program length.

SUMMARY

Students in the present study responded positively (83%) with their overall impressions of the four videos, but they were not as enthusiastic as students in a previous study (98%) who saw only one tape. It may be that the high quality of the one tape (storytelling) elicited the "rave" reviews, or it may be that once the novelty effect of seeing a video wore off, students were slightly less appreciative. At any rate, students were overall quite positive.

Students in both studies were also pleased with the content of the video presentations (98%; 83%), and both groups found the programs valuable (84%; 89%). Both groups felt strongly about keeping the tapes as part of the course (88%; 94%) and wished to see additional tapes (100%; 83%). Seeing four videos may have slightly diminished their enthusiasm for video instruction. It is clear from both studies (74%; 78%) that students profit from instruction directed through visual media. Students in the second study (83%) confirmed earlier findings (78%) that students receive little

instruction through videotapes, but they also expressed a strong desire (91%; 94%) to have more instruction in this manner. Findings indicate that 30 minute presentations are optimum for holding a student's attention and interest.